

Leeds Local Medical Committee

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26th April 2023

Sent by email

To:

Dr Amanda Doyle OBE, National Director for Primary Care and Community Services, NHS England
Tom Riordan, Chief Executive, Leeds City Council
Rob Webster CBE, Chief Executive, West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board

Re: Weight Management Services

Dear Amanda, Tom and Rob

I am writing to you as Leeds Local Medical Committee are seriously concerned at the lack of tier 2 weight management services for the people of Leeds. This is having a significant impact on the ability of GP practices in Leeds to help and support their patients who are overweight or obese and who are at risk of developing related complications.

On 30 March 2023 NHS England confirmed that the Weight Management Enhanced Service would continue for 2023/24. As this enhanced service makes clear:

“In 2018/19 the majority of adults in England (63%) were living with excess weight with 26% of men and 29% of women living with obesity or severe obesity. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of weight management. Living with excess weight puts people at greater risk of serious illness or death from COVID-19, with risk growing substantially as body mass index (BMI) increases.

As noted in the 2020 government policy document Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives, GP practices are often the first port of call when patients need health advice and support. The government has stressed the need to increase the frequency of interventions for obesity in general practice care with a focus on improving referral pathways into weight management services in every local health care system. The continuing aim for 2023/24 is to ensure that everyone living with obesity and who wants support for weight loss is offered this.”

The enhanced service also states that *“To support this ambition, £100m per annum for the next three years was allocated through the Spending Review 2021 for healthy weight.”*

However, in Leeds, GP practices have been unable to refer relevant patients to a tier 2 weight management service since October 2022. There is currently no tier 2 weight management service commissioned in Leeds for people who do not have diabetes or hypertension. This is unacceptable and as many of our patients are unable to afford to pay for commercial weight management

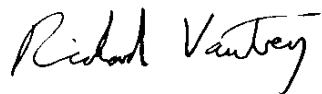
services it is widening health inequalities. Moreover, Leeds GP practices are unable to fulfil the requirements of the NHS England enhanced service.

Some Primary Care Networks have suggested that they may be able to repurpose some of their workforce, including health and wellbeing coaches, to be able to provide some support for these patients. However this workforce is limited in scope and capacity, not all PCNs could do this therefore widening health inequalities, and the funding for this service has been provided to local authorities not PCNs. In addition the enhanced service is clear that referrals should be made by suitably trained and competent GP practice or Primary Care Network healthcare professionals to a Local Authority funded tier 2 weight management service, and not delivered by PCN healthcare professionals.

I am therefore writing to ask what NHS England is doing to enable GP practices in Leeds to fulfil the requirements of the enhanced service, what Leeds City Council is doing to commission a tier 2 weight management service, and what West Yorkshire ICB is doing to address health inequalities in Leeds with respect to access to weight management services.

We hope this matter can be resolved quickly as we want our patients to be able to access the services they need as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely



Dr Richard Vautrey
Assistant Medical Secretary – Leeds Local Medical Committee.

cc:

Dr Victoria Eaton, Director of Public Health, Leeds City Council
Councillor Fiona Venner, Chair of the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board
Gaynor Connor, Director of Primary Care and Same Day Response, Leeds office of WY ICB